

AKIRA

26™



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KATSUHIRO OTOMO

AKIRA™ Vol 1, No. 21

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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 26

ASSASSINATION CORPS

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

2030. The world hovers on the brink of World War IV. **Kaneda**, leader of a band of teen-aged delinquents, brings his gang to a restricted area—the section of **Neo-Tokyo** known as the “old city”, where, thirty-eight years before, the first of the bombs fell.

As a result **Kaneda** and his friend **Tetsuo** become entangled in a power struggle between a mysterious military and scientific organization led by a man known only as the **Colonel** and an underground resistance group bent on putting a stop to the Colonel's activities. Members of the resistance include **Kay**, **Ryu**, and **Chiyoiko**. Among their superiors is the blind **Lady Miyako**—a powerful religious leader with strong precognitive gifts.

The **Colonel** has a number of psychic children under his control. **Takashi**, **Masaru**, and **Kiyoko** are identified by

numbers marked on their hands. **Lady Miyako** was, at one time, **Number 19**.

Number 28 is **Akira**, so powerful that since the war he has been suspended in cryogenic sleep.

The Colonel's staff conducts experiments which awaken tremendous telepathic potential in **Tetsuo**, who is dubbed **Number 41**. Able to shrug off the most serious injuries, **Tetsuo** goes on a killing spree, even attacking **Kaneda**. **Tetsuo** seeks out **Akira**, whose powers he thinks may rival his own. In hibernation, **Akira's** power responds to **Tetsuo's** psychic energy. When **Tetsuo** reaches **Akira's** resting place, the cryogenic chamber cracks from within, and **Akira** emerges.

The **Colonel** summons the powerful SOL military satellite and orders that its laser cannon be fired at **Tetsuo** and **Akira**. **Akira** is saved by **Kaneda** and **Kay**, but the laser strikes **Tetsuo's** left arm. Afterward, **Neo-Tokyo** is placed in a state of military emergency. “Caretaker robots” patrol the streets and keep order.

Akira and the resistance fighters are cornered by the Colonel's troops, and **Takashi** takes a stray bullet through



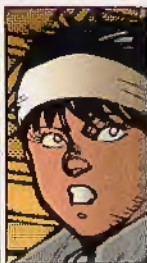
Kai



The Colonel



Lt. Yamada



Kay



the skull.

The trauma of Takashi's death galvanizes **Akira**. He unleashes a light blast powerful enough to devastate the entire city. **Masaru** and **Kiyoko** sweep most of the people in the area upward. **Kaneda** is last seen vanishing toward the sky. Afterward, **Lady Miyako** opens her temple and offers shelter and comfort to those in need.

Neo-Tokyo is completely cut off from the outside world, and in the western part of the city the **Great Tokyo Empire** is formed—a monarchy with **Akira** on the throne and **Tetsuo** as his prime minister. Together the pair use their powers, healing the sick, wielding control of the faithful, and organizing their subjects into fighting units to defend their land. The **Empire** is eventually infiltrated by teams of spies from the outside

world.

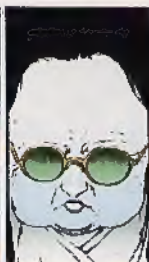
Masaru and **Kiyoko** are sick with withdrawal from the drug which augments and channels their mental powers. **Lady Miyako** asks that **Kay** bring the psychics to her.

Most of the spies from the outside are killed, but their leader, **Lt. Yamada**, escapes when **Ryu** appears and leads him to the safety of an underground shelter. **Yamada** refuses to tell **Ryu** who has sent him or let **Ryu** join him.

Tetsuo forces an orgy of sex and drugs on several young girls. Only one—**Kaori**—survives. Afterward, **Tetsuo** looks into **Akira's** mind and emerges a terrified wretch. He consults **Lady Miyako**—whose mind he also briefly touched. She recounts to him the experiments decades earlier which created the numbered psychics and revealed that the Third World



Chiyoko



Lady Miyako



Joker



Tetsuo

War was begun by a mental blast from **Akira**. She also warns **Tetsuo** that he alone can control Akira's near inconceivable powers but he must first overcome his dependency on drugs. Disgusted and perplexed, **Tetsuo** departs. On returning to his stronghold, he neglects his duties of state, concentrating instead on trying to kick the habit.

Kay and **Chiyoko** try to move **Masaru** and **Kiyoko** to Lady Miyako's temple. They are attacked by Tetsuo's followers, who escape with **Kiyoko**. **Chiyoko** rescues the girl, but is severely wounded. The two are brought to safety by the **Colonel**, who has been living in isolation. Before the **Colonel** departs in a caretaker robot with **Kiyoko**, **Chiyoko**, delirious, tells him to take the child to the temple. Meanwhile, **Kay** safely conveys **Masaru** to the temple.

Ryu and **Yamada** watch the **Empire** from hiding and are startled by an encounter with **Tetsuo**, whose withdrawal causes his power to surge erratically. **Ryu** is even more startled when **Tetsuo** blurts out what his telepathy has shown him—that **Yamada** has come to assassinate

Akira.

Tetsuo's Lieutenant—acting without authorization—leads his army to Lady Miyako's temple, where they slaughter monks, penitents and helpless refugees. They are defeated by the power of Lady Miyako's psychically gifted monks and Kay's quick thinking. As the Empire's forces begin a new attack, **Tetsuo** returns to the shrine, maddened with the pain of withdrawal. The **Colonel**, who has been wounded by soldiers of the **Empire**, reaches the shrine at the same time and uses a remote control that enables him to fire a blast from the SOL satellite. As a result, **Tetsuo** unleashes a wave of devastating psychic power, driving off his own army. During the mayhem this creates, **Kaneda** reappears, as if from nowhere.

Tetsuo takes another inner voyage, reliving both the happy and painful episodes from his past. He sees a vision of the double helix spiral that **Akira** constantly creates when he plays. Only **Kaori** is there to see **Tetsuo** return to the **Great Tokyo Empire** and bow down to his young lord.

Aboard an American Naval vessel, an international con-



Kaneda



Kiyoko



Tetsuo's Aide



Masaru

clave of scientists assembles. They pool their knowledge of **Akira** and code name him **Juvenile A**. Their data indicates that the effect of Akira's power is like that of the Big Bang—the force that created the universe—and that the most recent blast (Tetsuo's) lacked the scope and dimensions of the earlier ones. They also theorize a link between the psychic blasts and the firing of SOL, which is now, once again under military control.

Kaneda complains to **Kai**—a member of Kaneda's old gang who's been helping **Kay** defend Lady Miyako's shrine—about his ragged clothing. **Kai** leads him to a black market shop in the local thieves' quarter.

Leading the thieves is **Joker**, the former leader of the Clown motorcycle gang, who were Kaneda's most bitter enemies. However, **Kaneda**, **Kai**, and **Joker** agree to work together to avenge Tetsuo's crimes.

The **Colonel**, too, is after **Tetsuo**, blaming himself for the destruction **Tetsuo** has created. **Kay** badgers the **Colonel**, hoping to make him reveal Chiyoko's whereabouts. Instead, the **Colonel** con-

vinces **Kay** to join him, and the pair leave the shrine together. **Lady Miyako** is irate when she learns of this, and sends for **Kaneda**. She implores him to return with her "beloved daughter". **Kaneda** and **Kai** agree, "borrowing" a prized pair of motorcycles from **Joker** to speed their search, and **Kaneda** confesses that he has been hearing Kay's voice, telling him where she's gone, perhaps through psychic means. The pair take to the subways. They confront an eerie spectral vision of **Kay**, similar to a vision **Kay** once saw of **Kaneda**.

Kay and the **Colonel**—still weak from his injuries—are harried by a giant psychic and soldiers for the **Great Tokyo Empire**, but they safely reach the **Colonel's** headquarters ahead of their enemies. There, the doctor and **Chiyoko**, who is still unconscious, are being guarded by a caretaker robot. When the enemy arrives, **Kay** and the **Colonel** use subterfuge to mislead and harass them, and in the midst of the battle, **Kay** realizes that she can use the caretaker to carry **Chiyoko** to safety. Meanwhile, the giant psychic finds **Chiyoko**, and the **Colonel** finds himself out of bullets.



Akira



Kaori

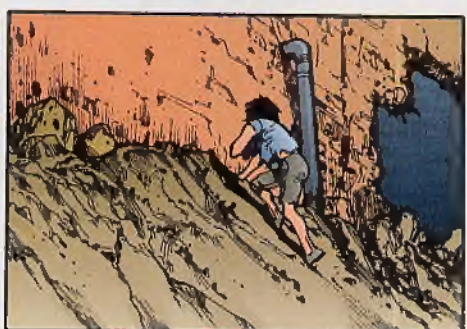


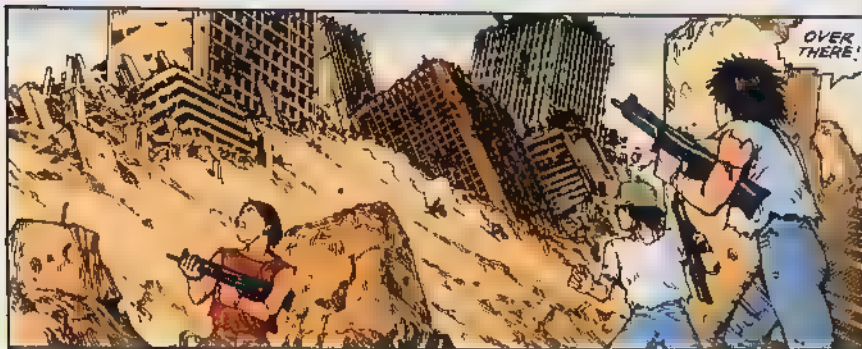
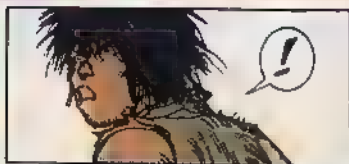
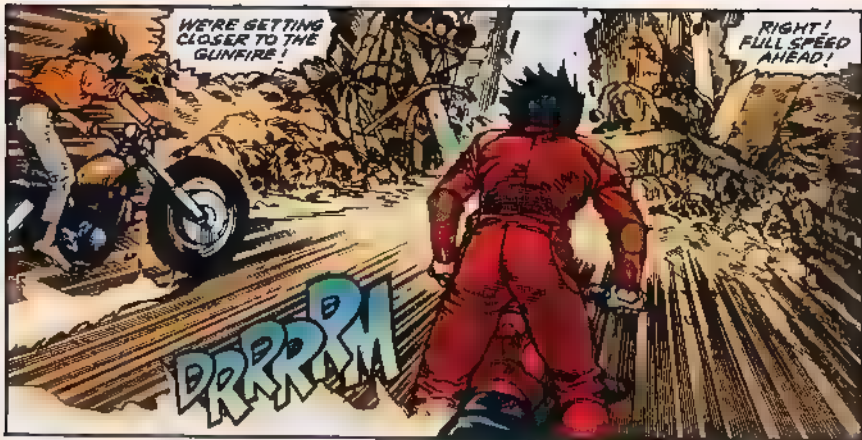
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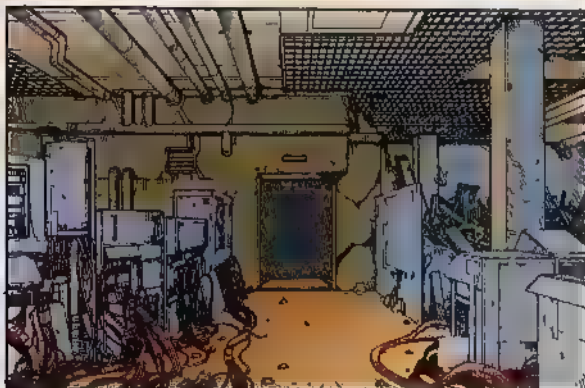
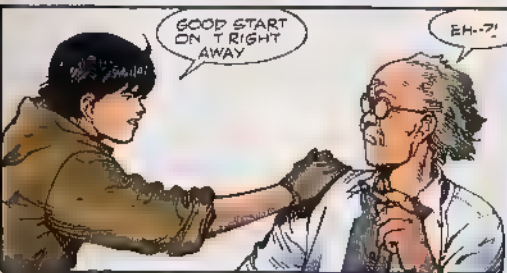
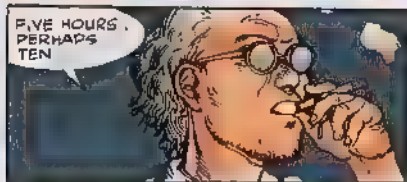
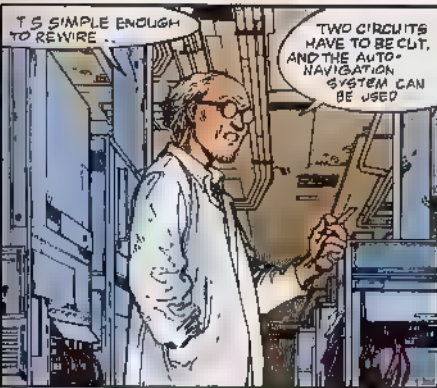


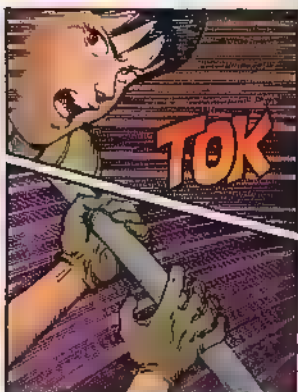
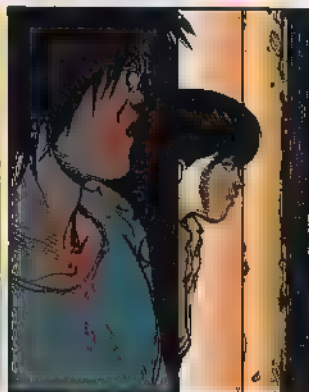
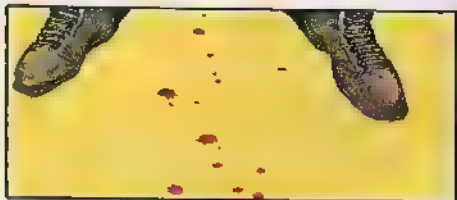
Ryu

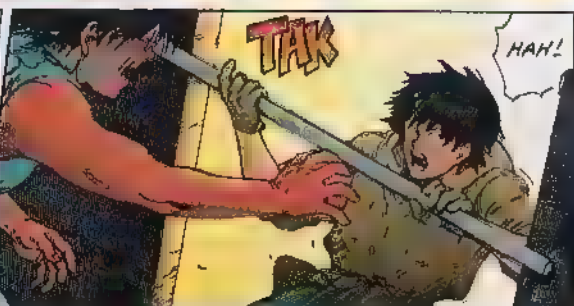


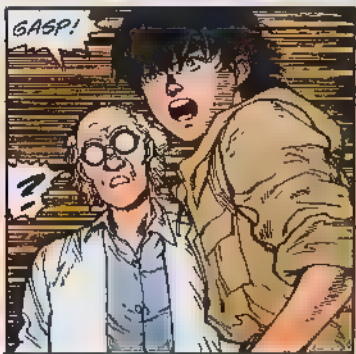
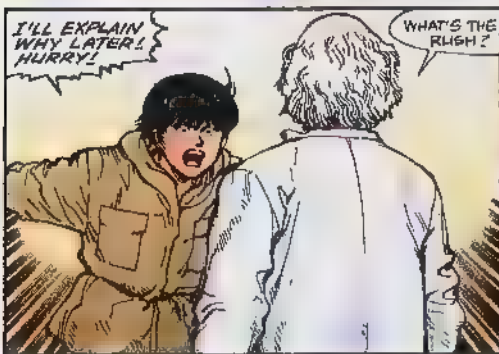
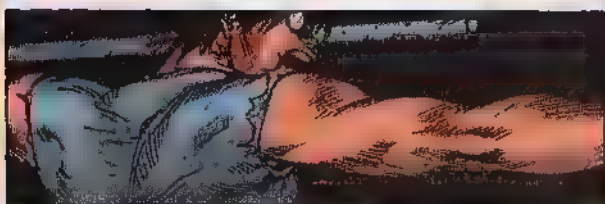
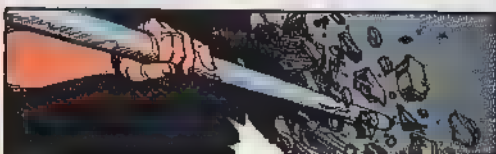
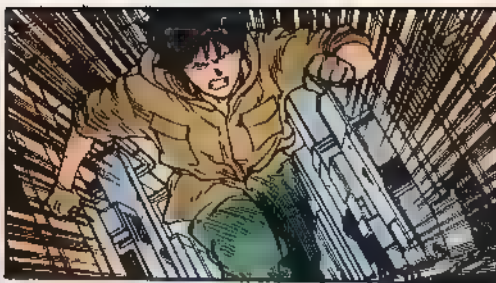


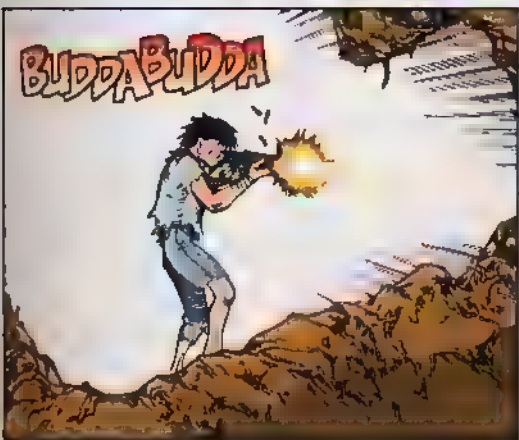
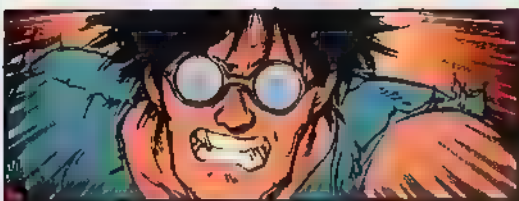


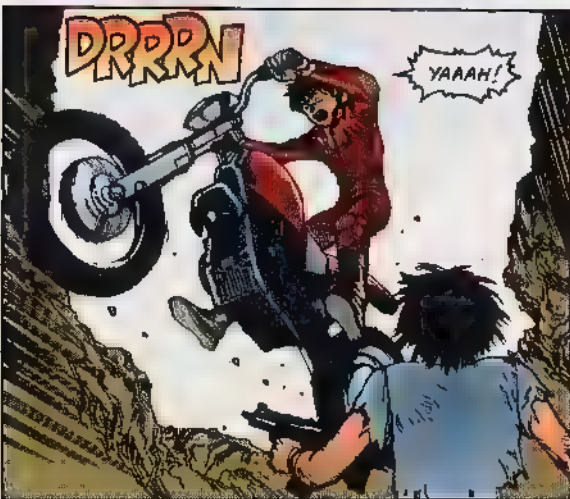
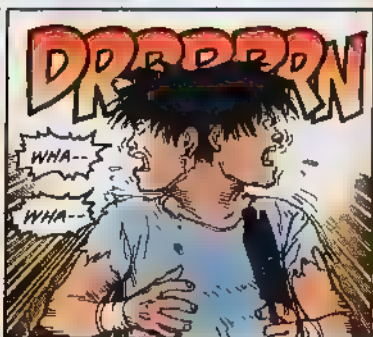
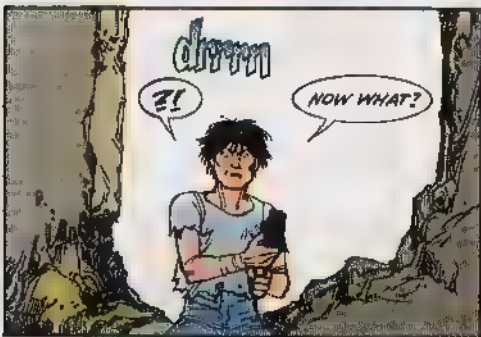
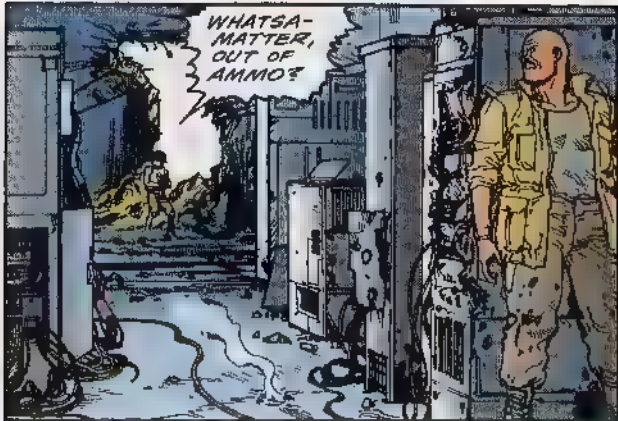


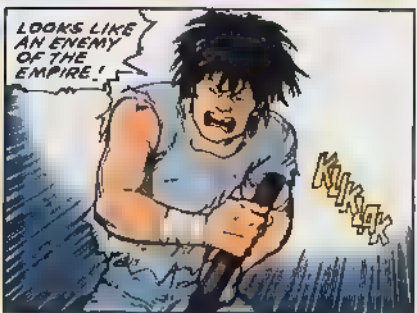
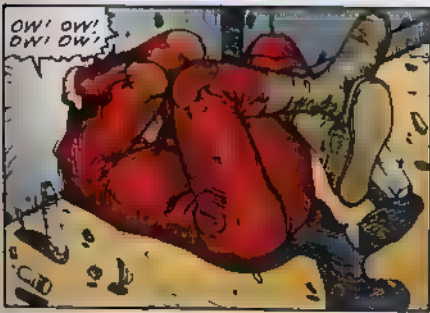
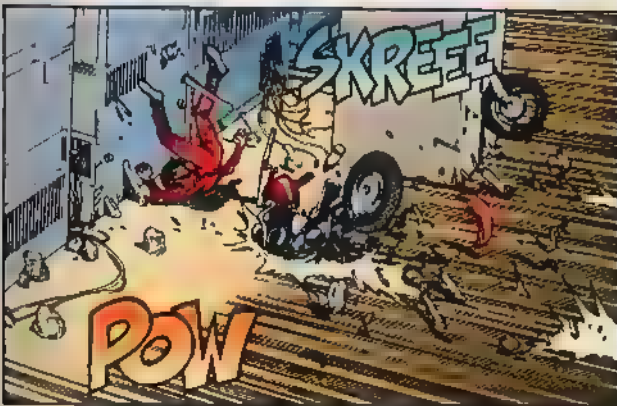


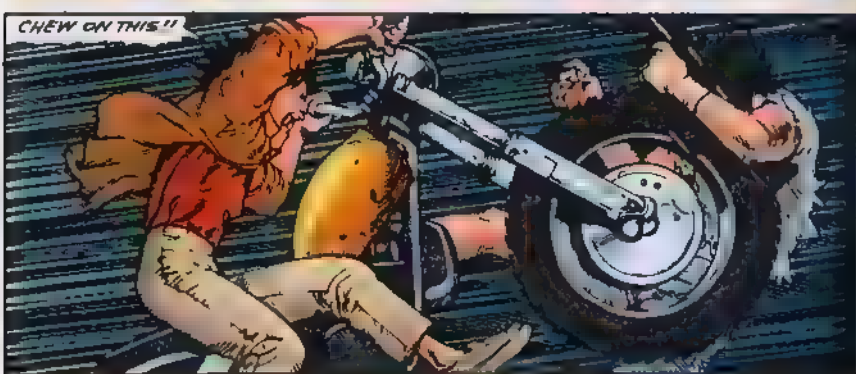
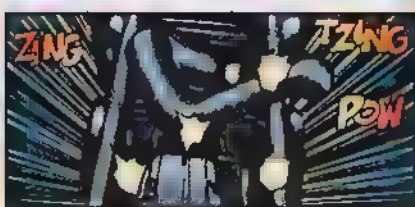
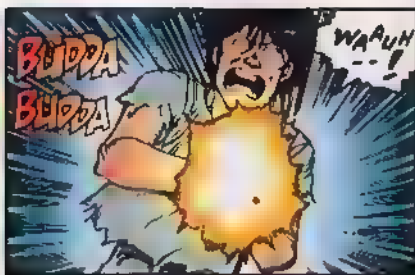


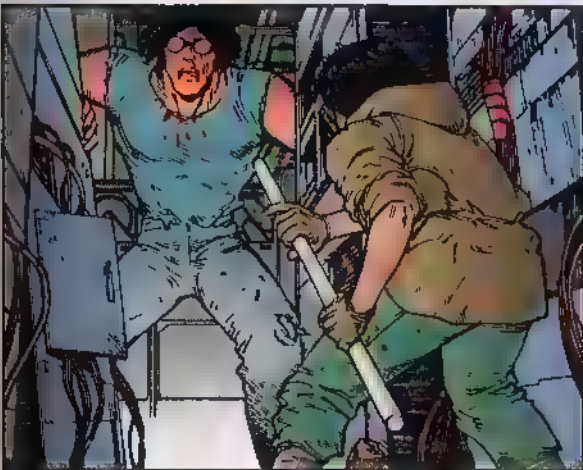
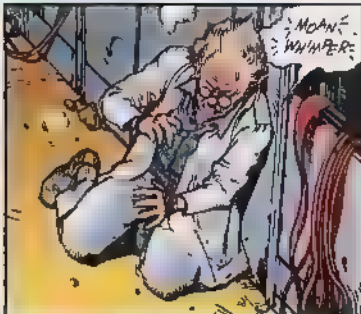
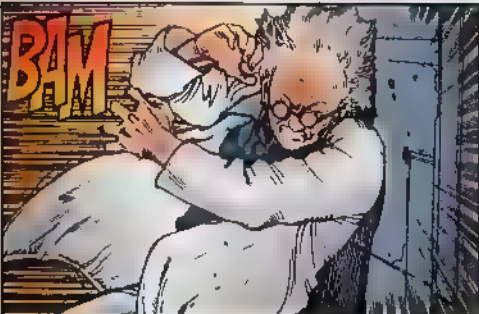




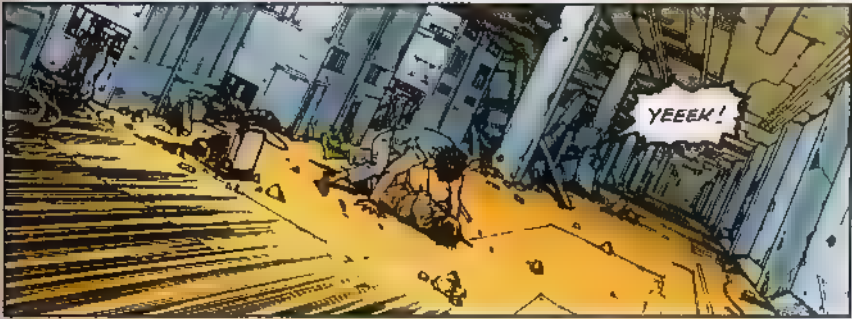
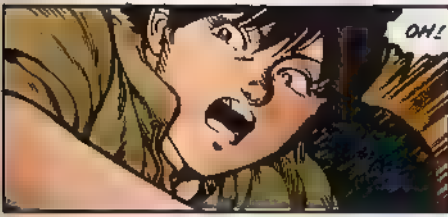


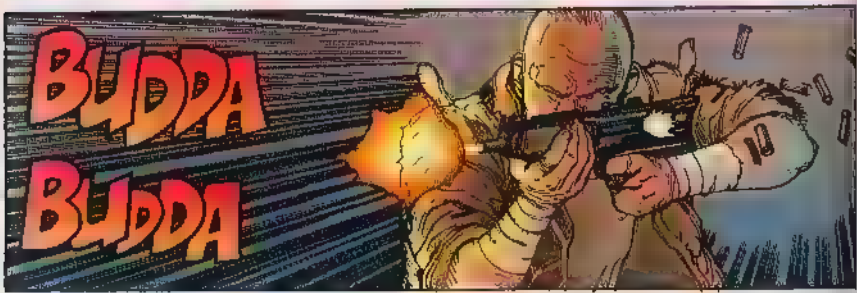
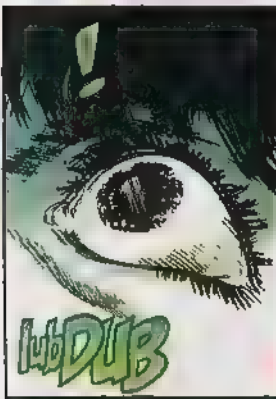


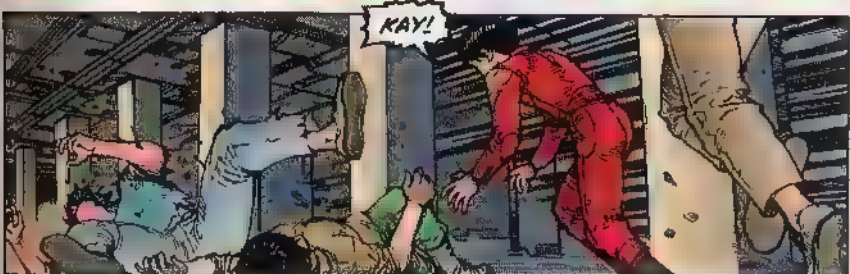
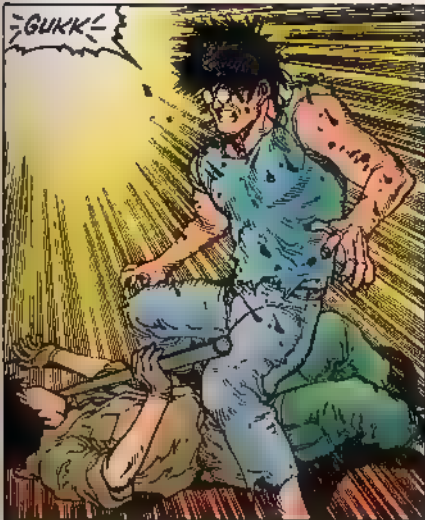


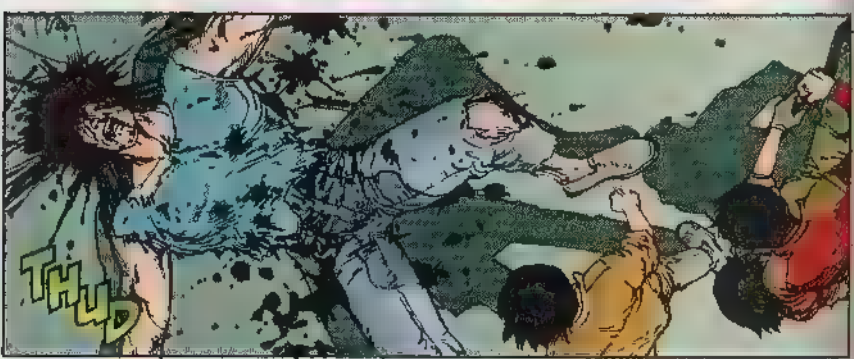
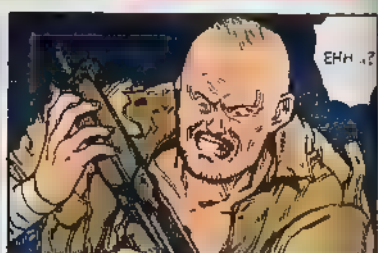
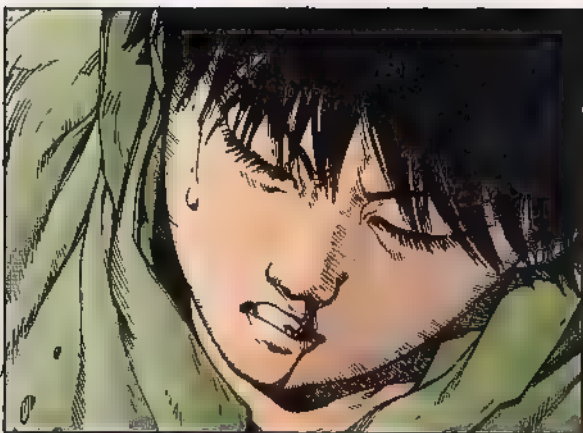


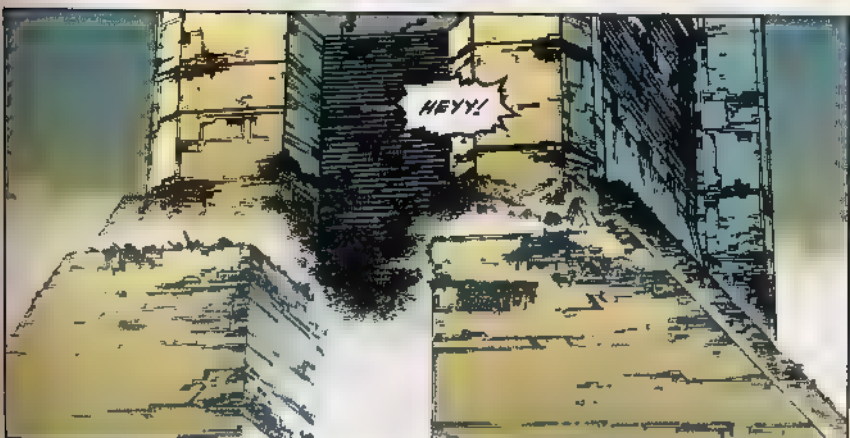
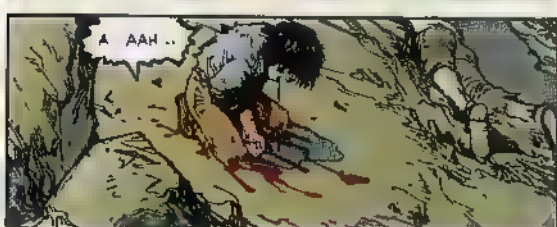
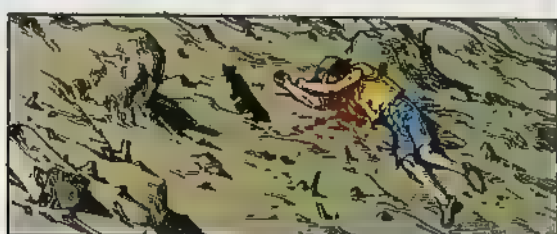


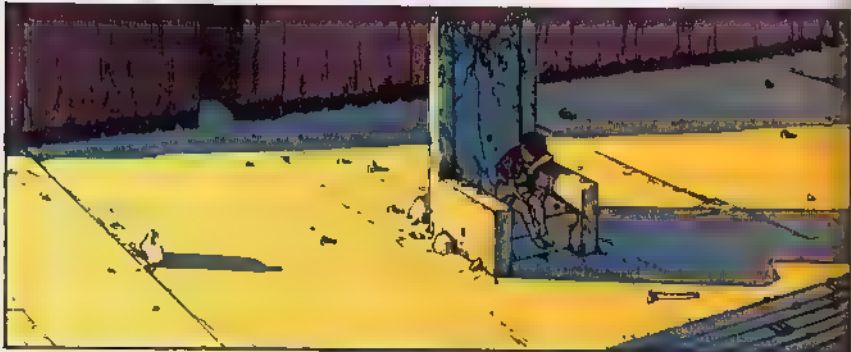
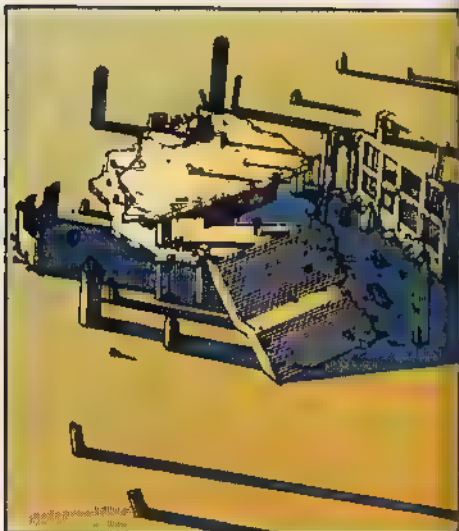
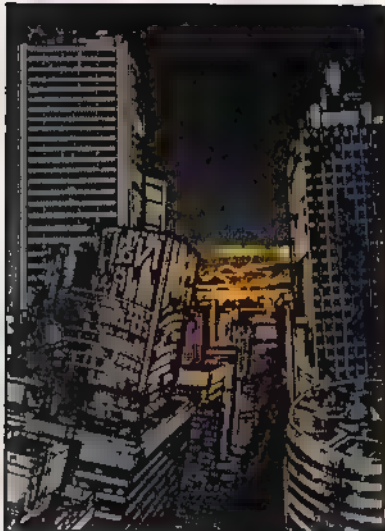


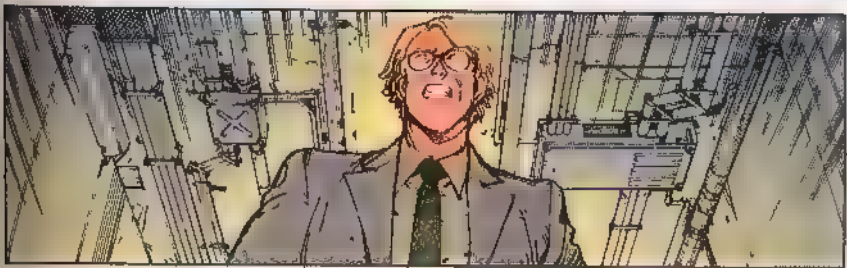
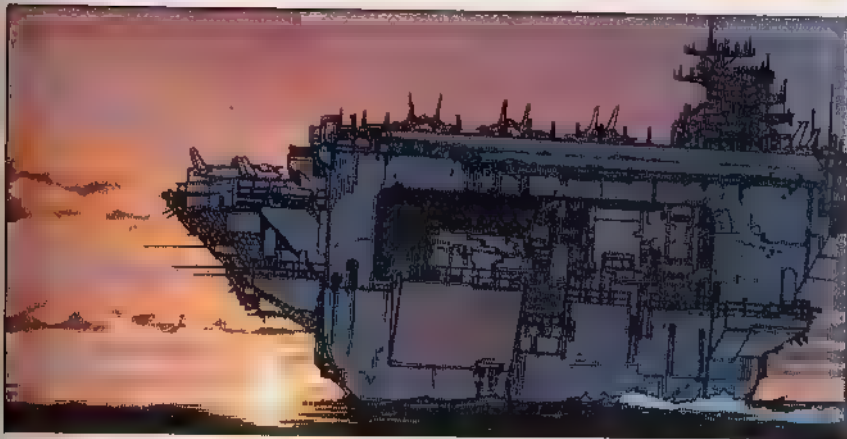
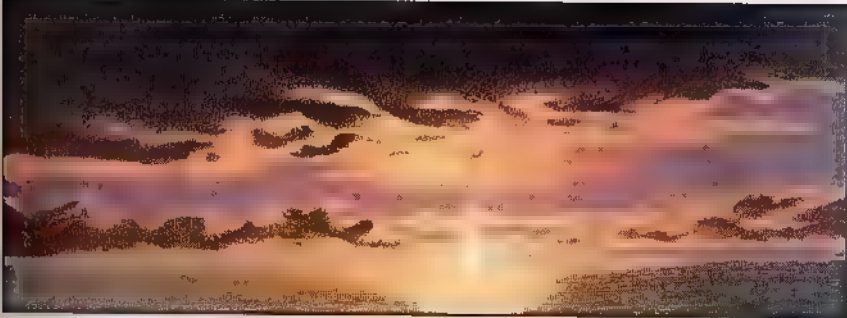















WHAT?



IS THAT TRUE?



WHERE
DID
YOU
HEAR
IT?



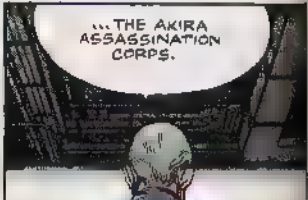
ONE OF THE OFFICERS
WAS DISCUSSING IT IN
THE MESS. I DIDN'T
GET ANY DETAILS, BUT
THEY'RE SCHEDULED
TO ARRIVE
TONIGHT.

WHY WEREN'T
WE NOTIFIED
OF THIS?

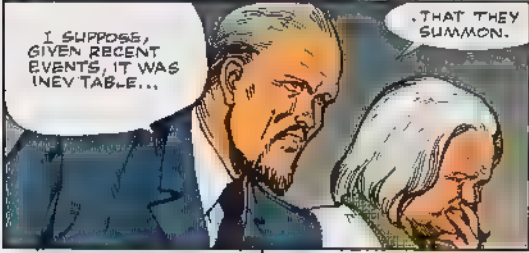
TONIGHT
...ON THIS
SHIP?



I'VE
HEARD
OF THE
CORPS, OF
COURSE
BUT...



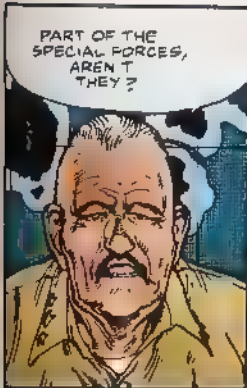
...THE AKIRA
ASSASSINATION
CORPS.



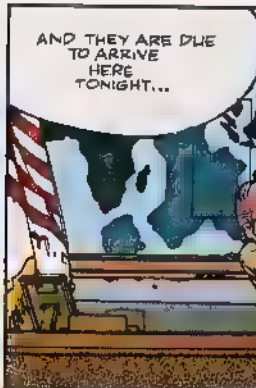
I SUPPOSE,
GIVEN RECENT
EVENTS, IT WAS
INEV TABLE...

...THAT THEY
SUMMON.

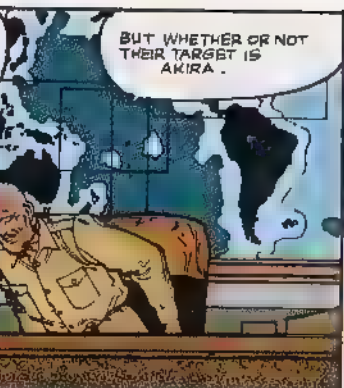
PART OF THE
SPECIAL FORCES,
AREN'T
THEY?



AND THEY ARE DUE
TO ARRIVE
HERE
TONIGHT...



BUT WHETHER OR NOT
THEIR TARGET IS
AKIRA.



...HAS YET TO BE
CONFIRMED.

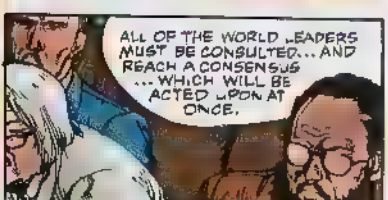


.. MUCH
WILL
DEPEND.

...ON THE DISCUSSIONS
FOLLOWING THE
PRESENTATION
OF YOUR
REPORT.



ALL OF THE WORLD LEADERS
MUST BE CONSULTED... AND
REACH A CONSENSUS
... WHICH WILL BE
ACTED UPON AT
ONCE.



ALL FORCES MUST BE
PUT IN PLACE NOW,
READY TO IMPLEMENT
THEIR DECISION.

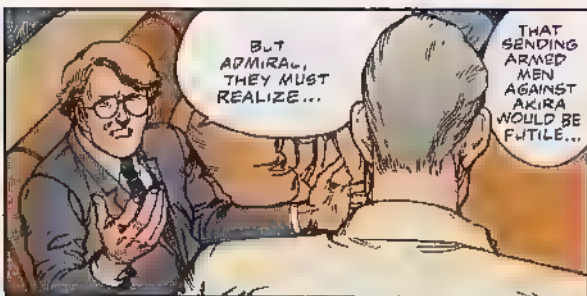


HOW MUCH WEIGHT WILL
OUR RECOMMENDATIONS
RECEIVE?



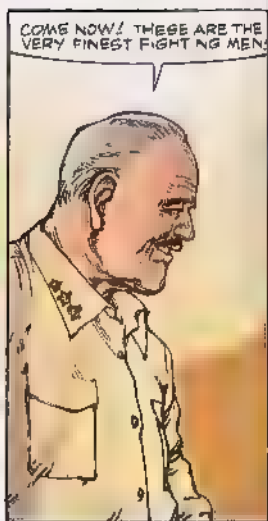
YOU HAVE MY ASSURANCE,
YOUR INPUT WILL BE
GIVEN
MAXIMUM
CONSIDERATION





BUT
ADMIRAL,
THEY MUST
REALIZE...

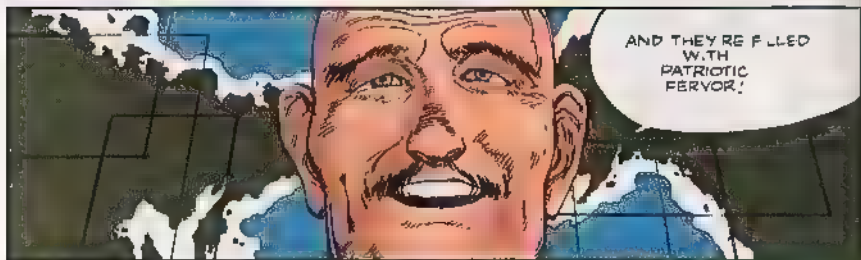
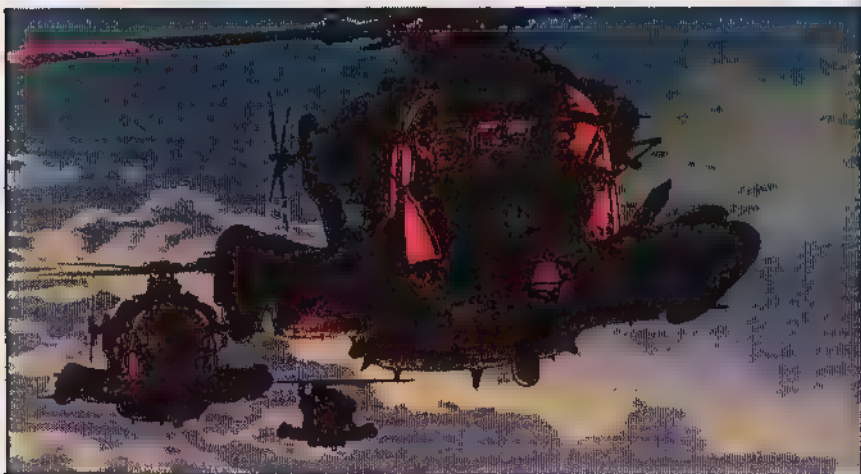
THAT
SENDING
ARMED
MEN
AGAINST
AKIRA
WOULD BE
FUTILE...



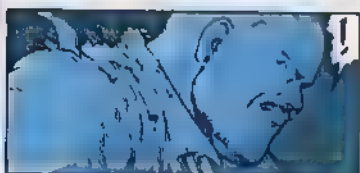
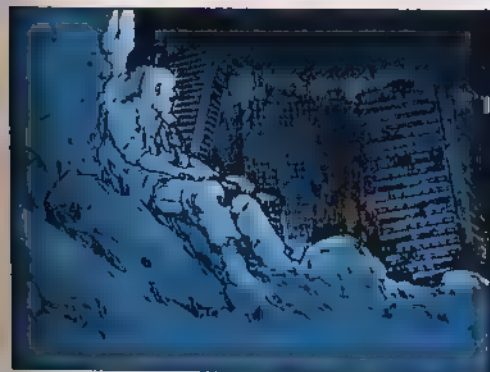
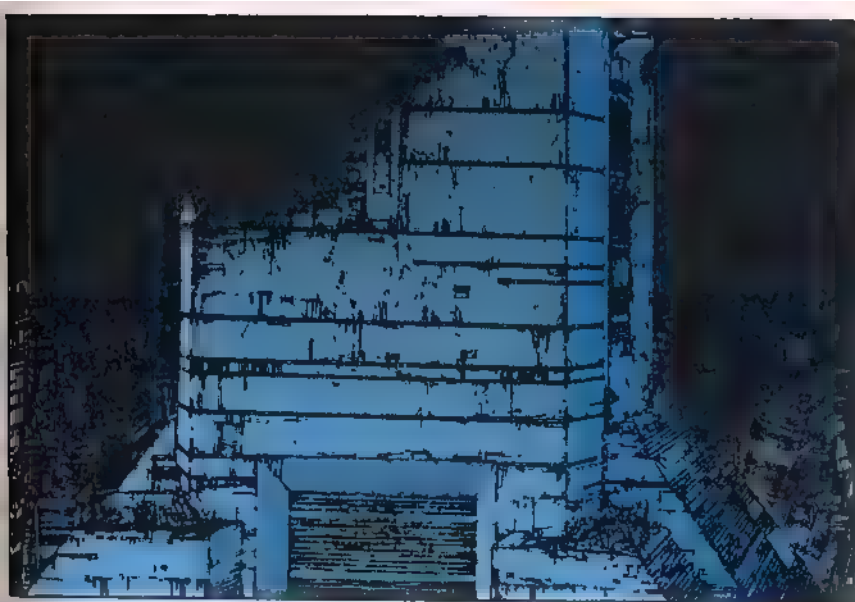
COME NOW! THESE ARE THE
VERY FINEST FIGHTING MEN!



A SENSELESS
WASTE OF HUMAN
LIVES!



AND THEY'RE FILLED
WITH
PATRIOTIC
FERVOR!

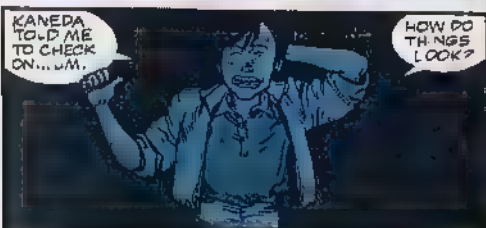


HOLD
YOUR
FIRE!
IT'S ME
--KAI!!



OH.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?



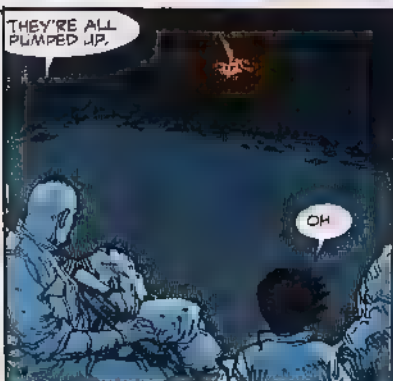
KANEDA TOLD ME TO CHECK ON... U.M.

HOW DO THINGS LOOK?



HUNH?

SEE FOR YOURSELF



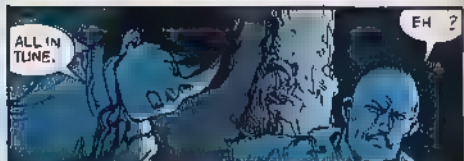
THEY'RE ALL PUMPED UP.

OH



KANAMA

YAHAMA



ALL IN TUNE.

EH ?



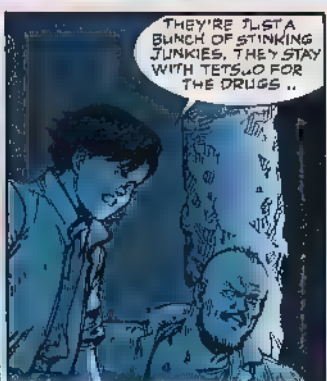
IT'S THOSE PILLS ..

THEY CAN GET HIGH ON JUST A FEW GRAINS.

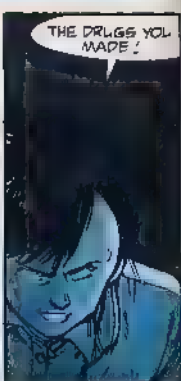
BANG

SUCKER'S GONNA DIE

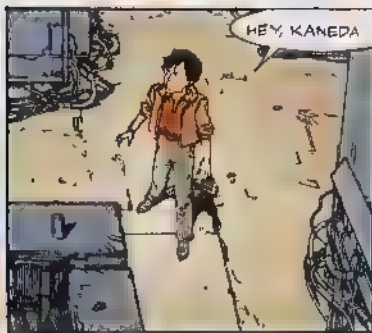
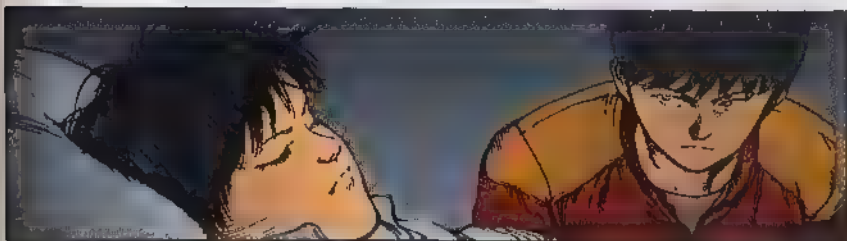
DAWN STRAIGHT

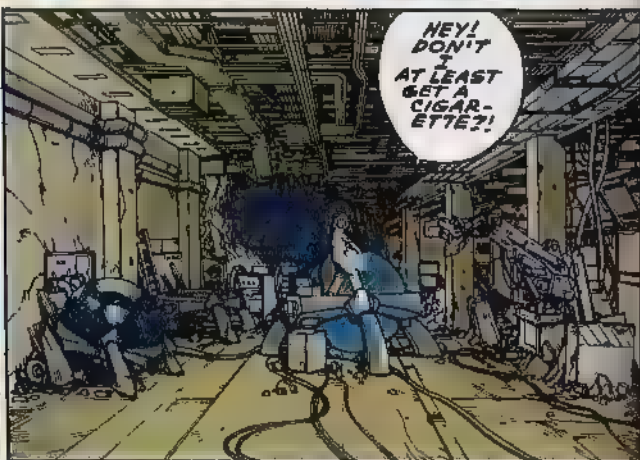
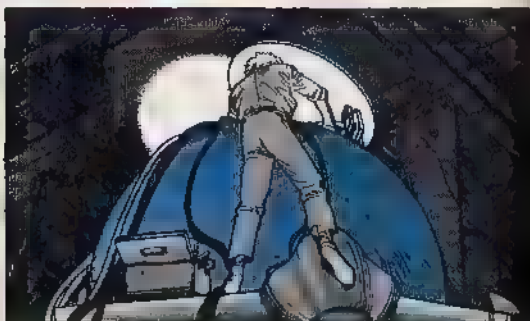
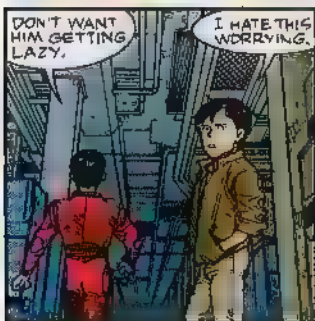
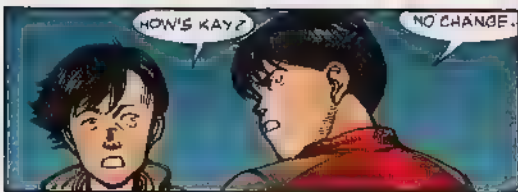


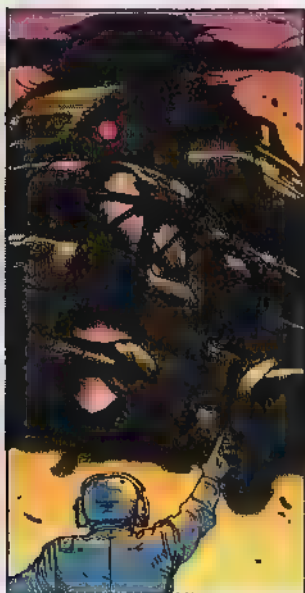
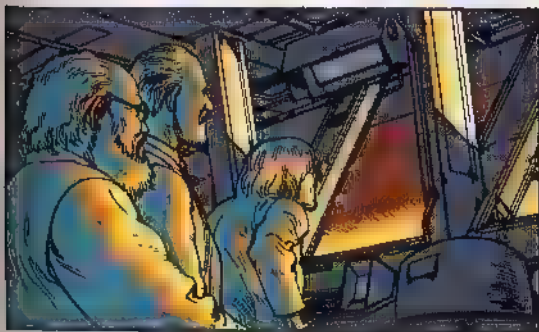
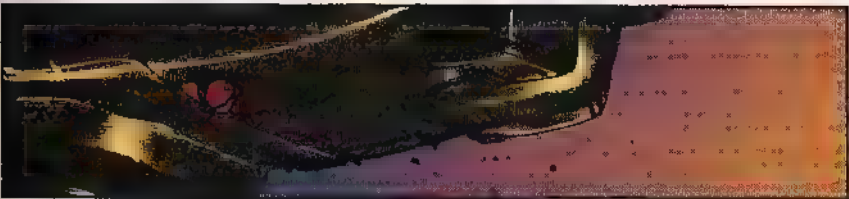
THEY'RE JUST A BUNCH OF STINKING JUNKIES. THEY STAY WITH TETSUO FOR THE DRUGS ..

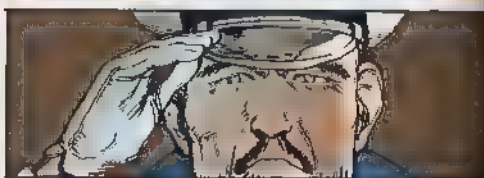
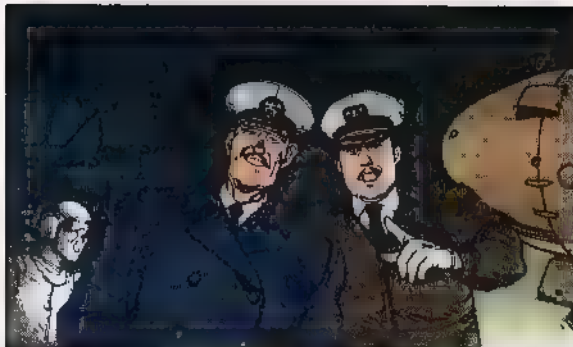


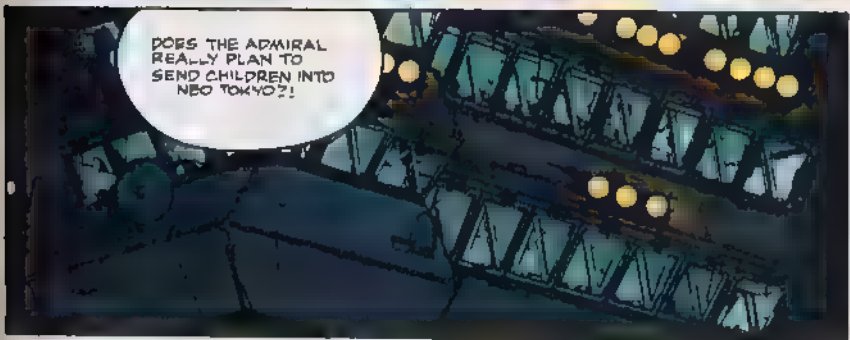
THE DRUGS YOU MADE !

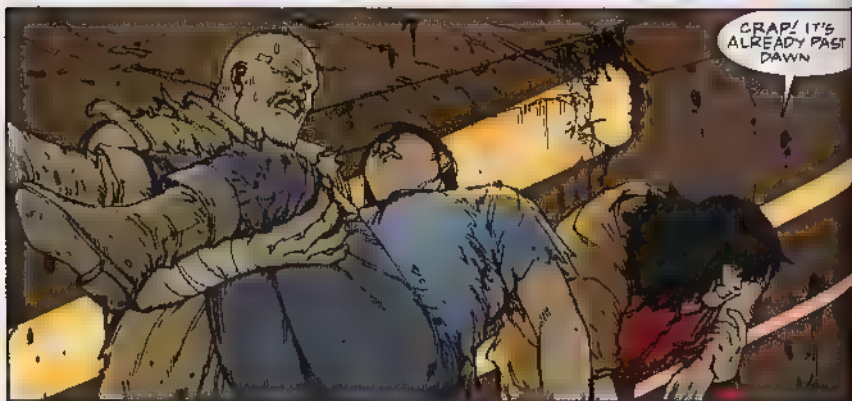
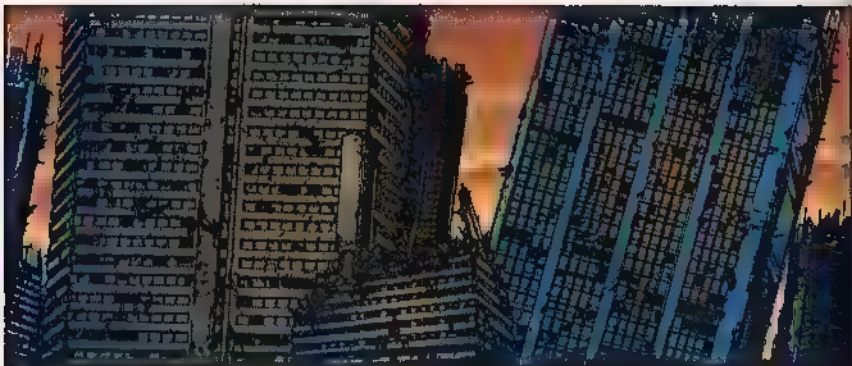












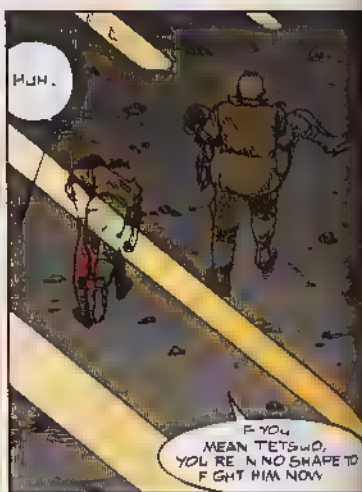
CRAP! IT'S
ALREADY PAST
DAWN



HEY, BALDY
HOW COME YOU'RE
STAYING
BEHIND?

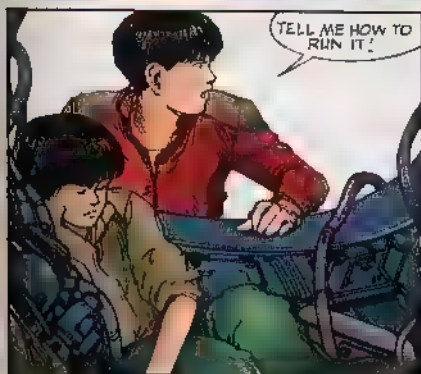
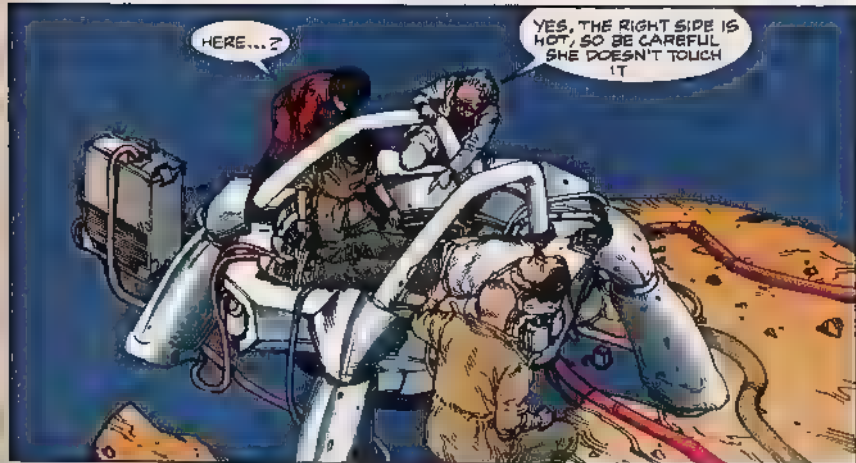


I HAVE SOME
UNFINISHED
BUSINESS TO
TAKE CARE
OF

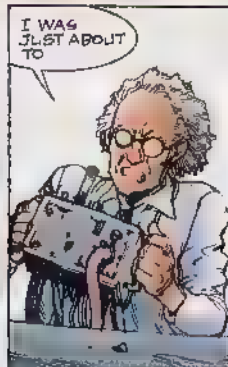


HUH.

IF YOU
MEAN TETSWO,
YOU'RE IN NO SHAPE TO
FIGHT HIM NOW



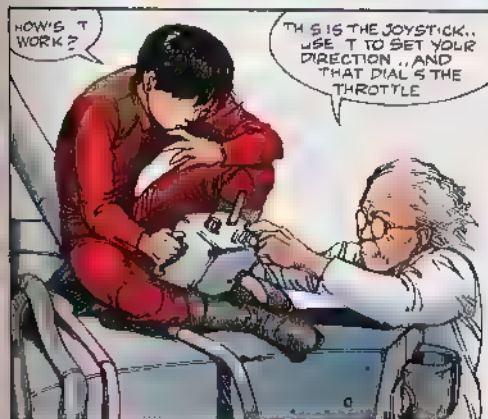
TELL ME HOW TO RUN IT!



I WAS JUST ABOUT TO

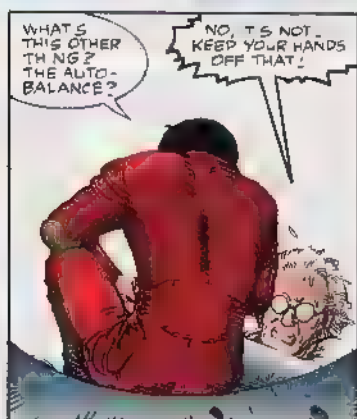


THIS IS THE CONTROL BOX.



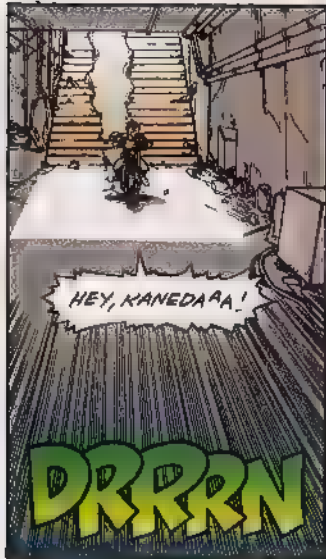
HOW'S IT WORK?

THIS IS THE JOYSTICK.. USE IT TO SET YOUR DIRECTION.. AND THAT DIAL'S THE THROTTLE



WHAT'S THIS OTHER THING? THE AUTO-BALANCE?

NO, IT'S NOT. KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF THAT!

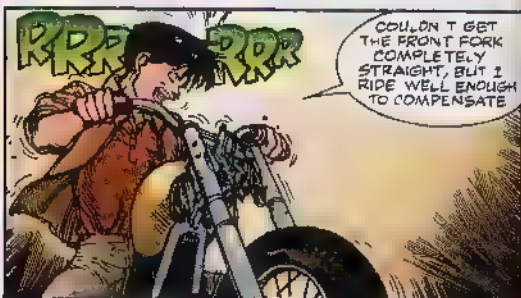


HEY, KANEDAAA!

DRRRRN



DID YOU REPAIR THE BIKE?



RRRR RRRR

COULDN'T GET THE FRONT FORK COMPLETELY STRAIGHT, BUT I RIDE WELL ENOUGH TO COMPENSATE



RIGHT!

LET'S GO!



HERE YOU'LL NEED THIS



THANKS

REMEMBER COLONEL

I'LL BE THE ONE TO FINISH TETSUO!

DRRRRN

WE'RE OUTTA HERE!

TOM

TOM

TOM

KEEP YOUR
HANDS OFF
THE RED
SWITCH!

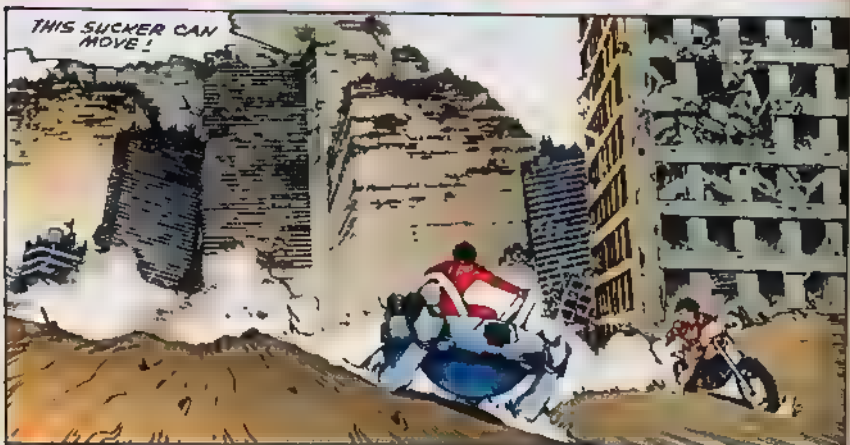
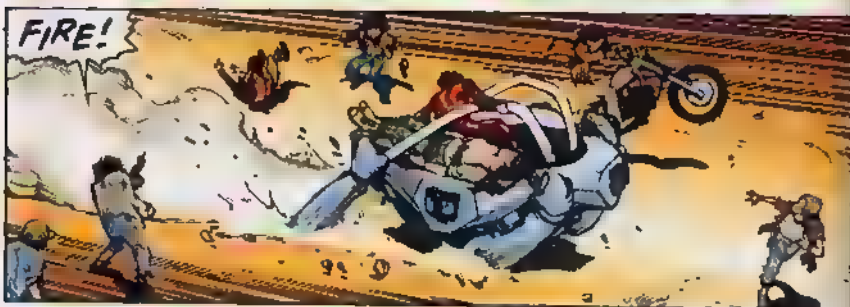
TOM

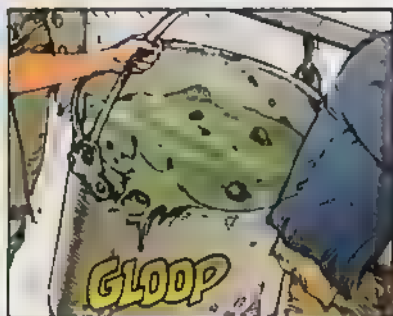
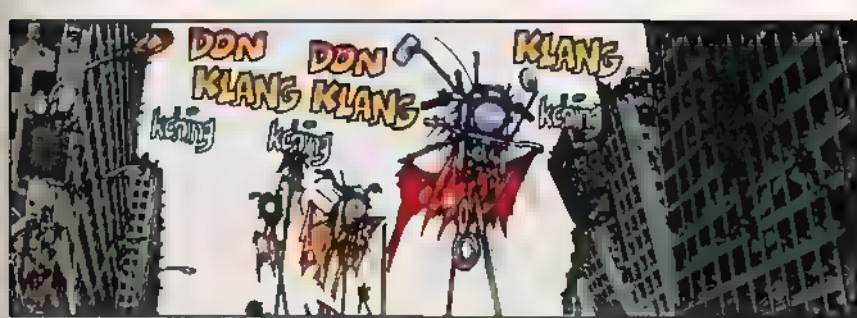
TOM

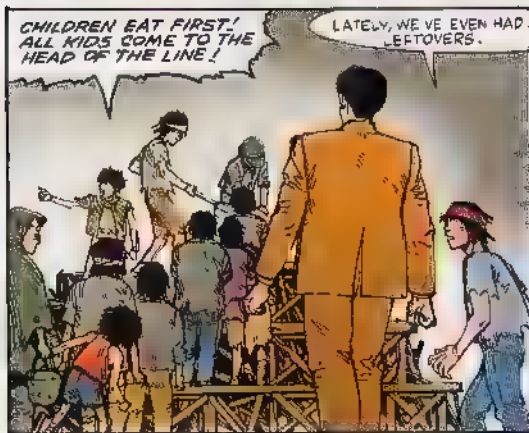
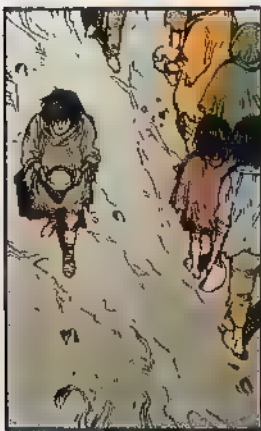
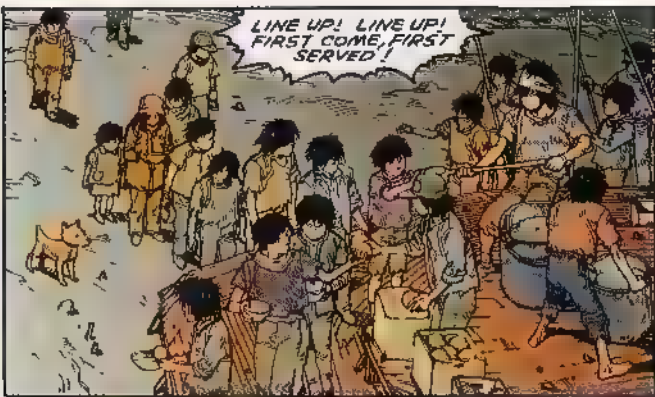
THEIR YOUTH
& THEIR GREATEST
WEAPON

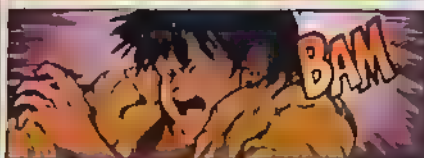
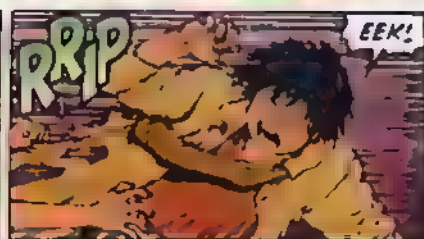
LESSER NOW THE
JOYSTICK IS FOR
STEERING

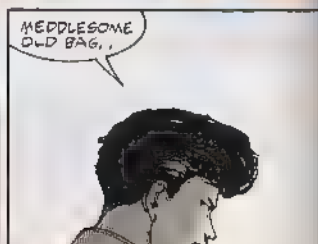
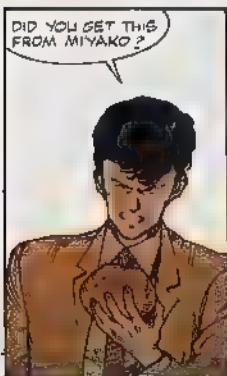
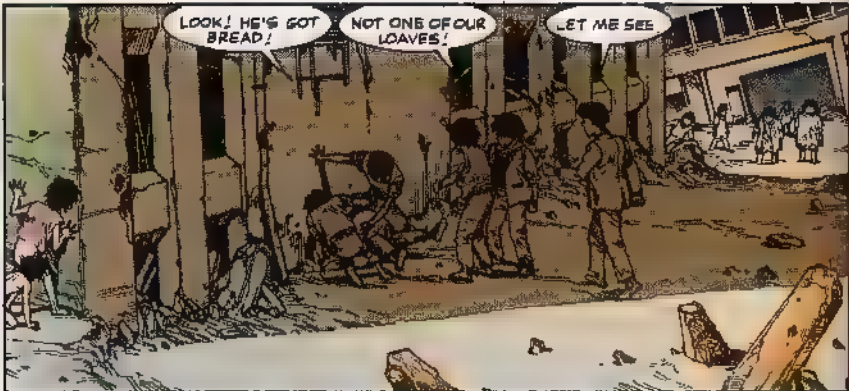
AND THE
OTHER THING'S
THE THROTTLE
GOT IT.

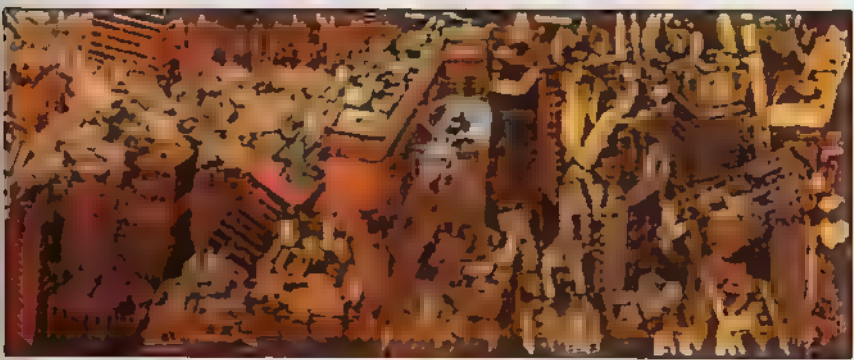




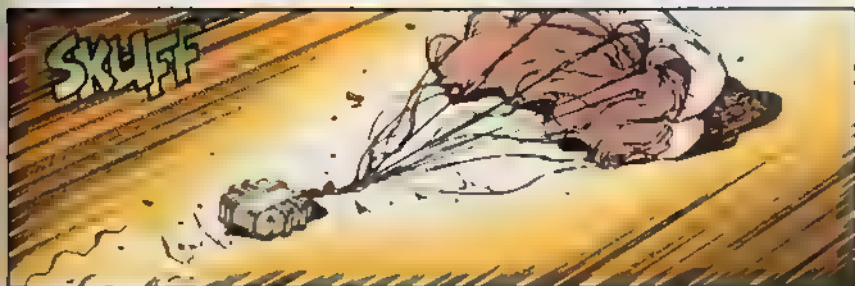
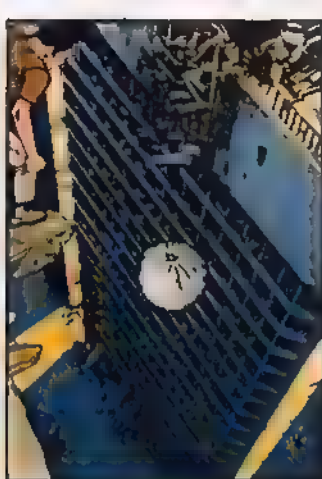
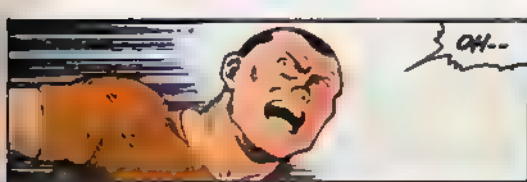


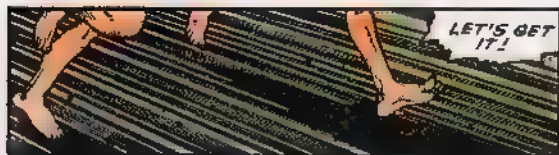




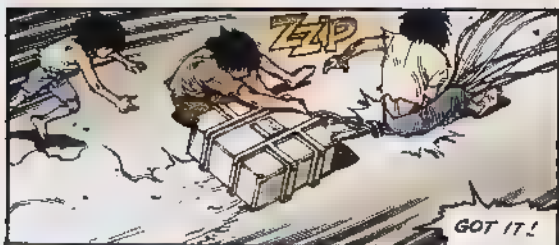






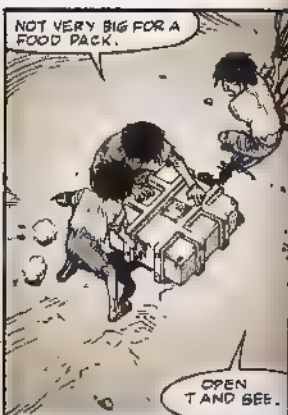


LET'S GET IT!



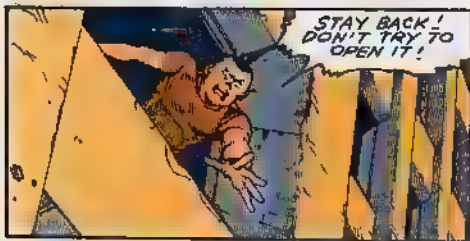
ZAP

GOT IT!



NOT VERY BIG FOR A FOOD PACK.

OPEN T AND SEE.



STAY BACK! DON'T TRY TO OPEN IT!



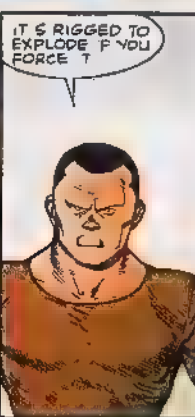
...YOU!



MORE THAN STANDARD SUPPLIES. HUNH?



TAK

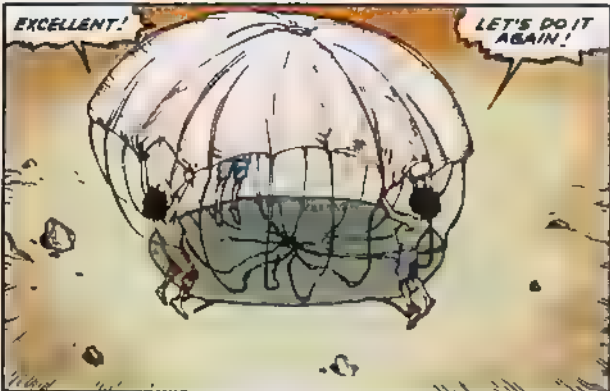


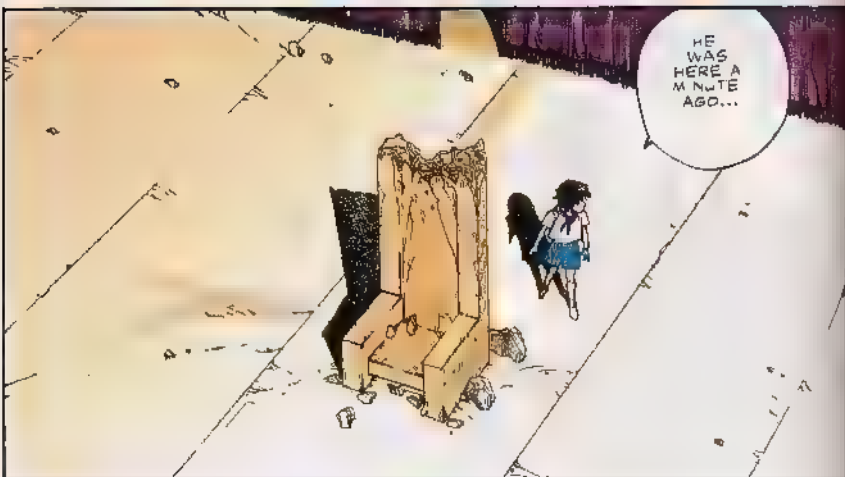
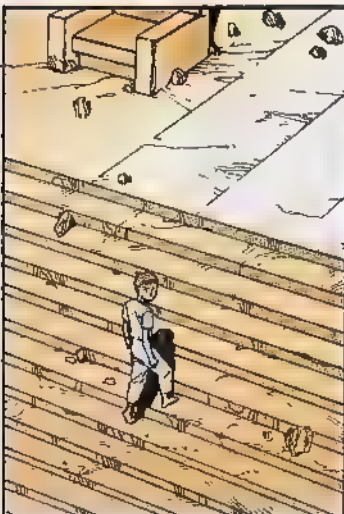
IT'S RIGGED TO EXPLODE IF YOU FORCE IT

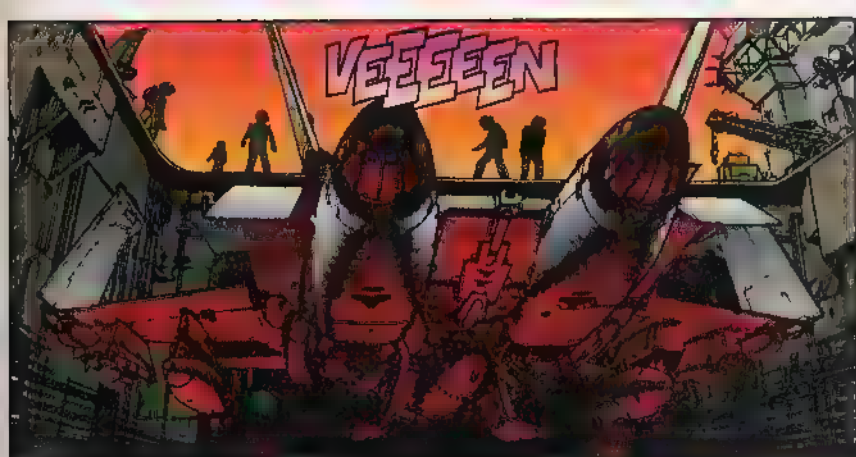


YOU KIDS HEARD THE MAN NO FOOD

NOW, BEAT IT.







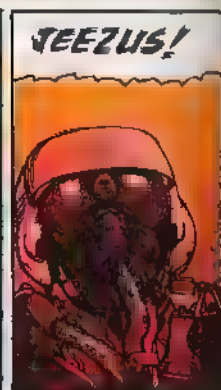
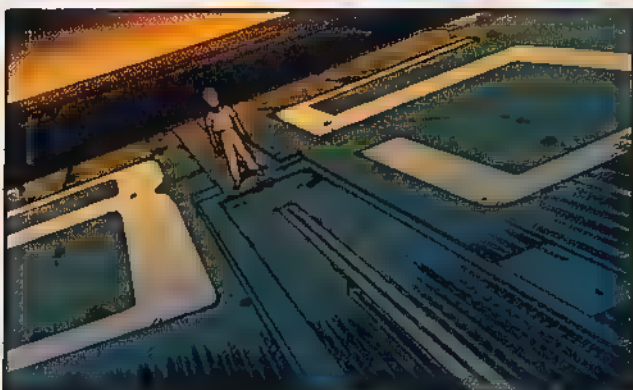
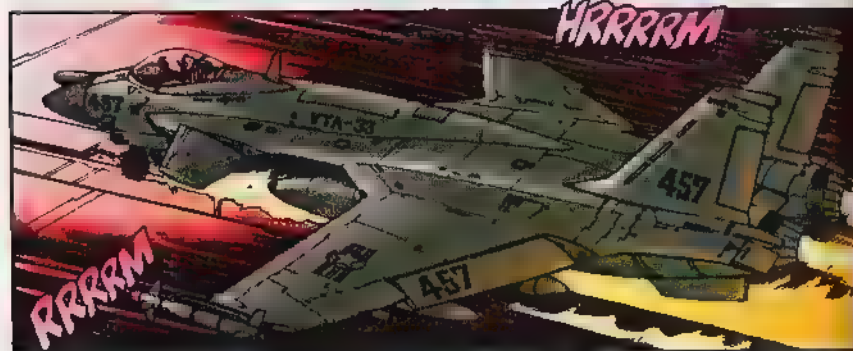
RUN! IF YOU'RE
NOT AIRBORNE
IN FIVE
MINUTES, YOU'RE
A SITTING
DUCK!

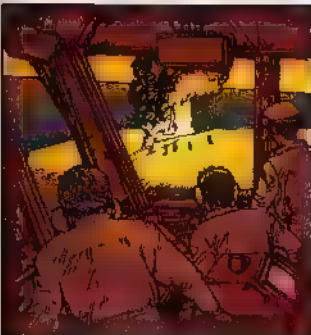


DELTA
TANGO 457
CLEARED
FOR
TAKEOFF!

JOE, DO YOU COPY?











HHRRM...
G-GURK



WHO--OR WHAT--
IS COMING,
KARMA
TANG,
?



HUHH?!



OH!

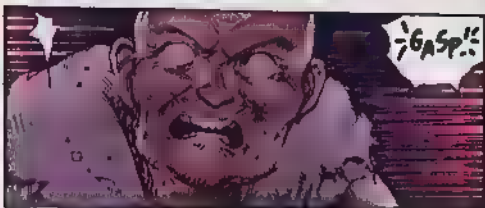
THE
LIGHTS--!



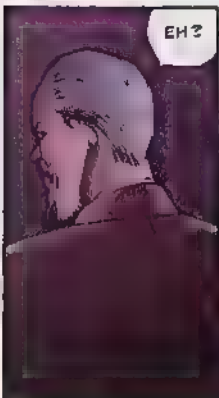
GURK



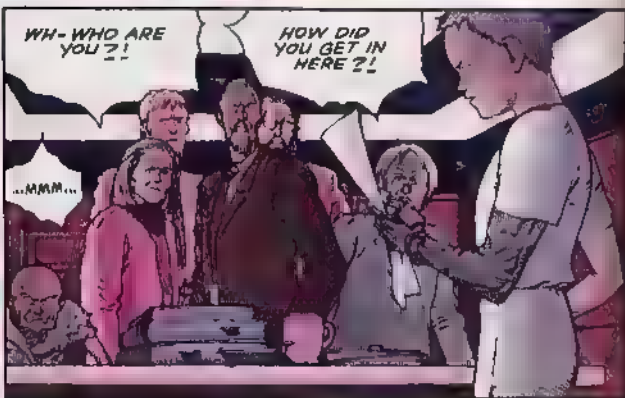
PAH



GASP!



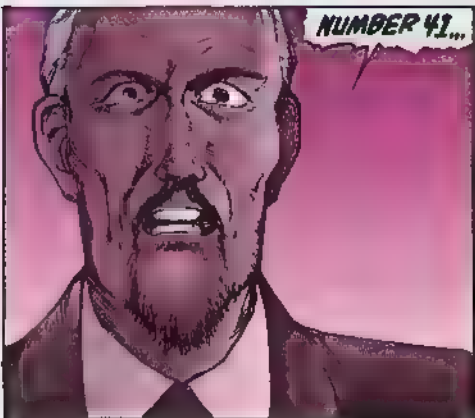
EH?



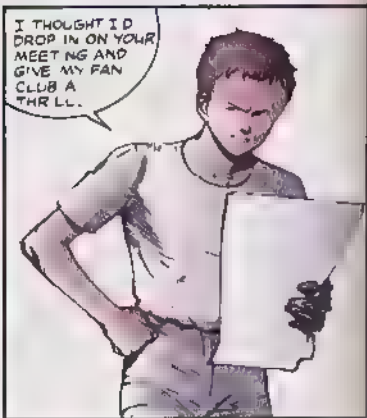
WH-HO ARE YOU?!

HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?!

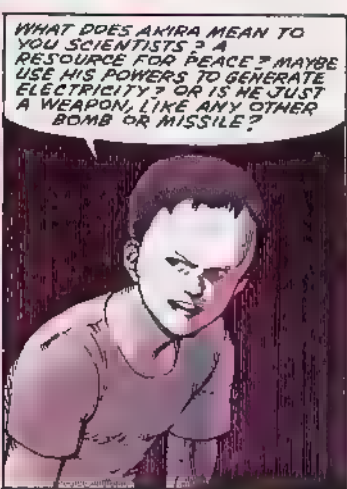
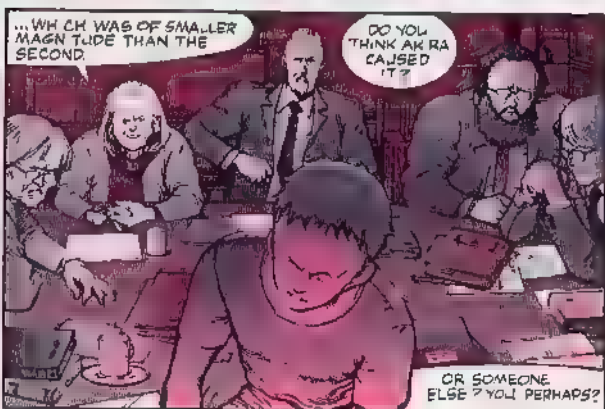
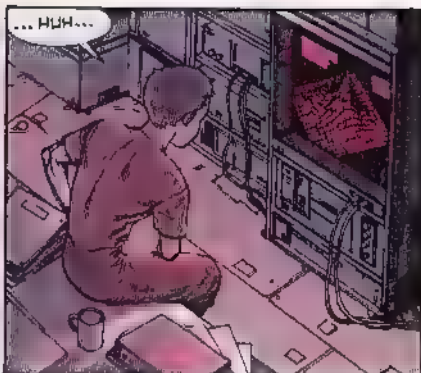
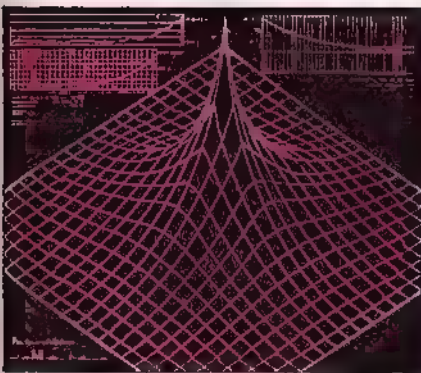
...MMM...



NUMBER 41...



I THOUGHT I'D
DROP IN ON YOUR
MEETING AND
GIVE MY FAN
CLUB A
THRILL.



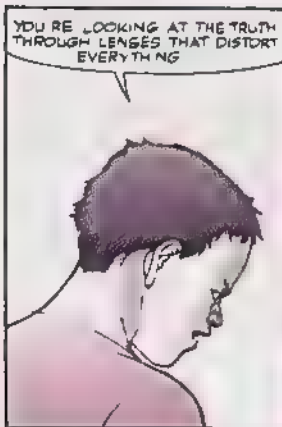


YOU GUYS ARE REALLY PATHETIC.

YOU SIT AROUND IN YOUR LITTLE ABS IN THE DARK...GET YOUR ROCKS OFF LOOKING DOWN M CROSCOPES OR PEEKING THROUGH TELESCOPES...



HE'S A PROBLEM WE FEEL WE MUST UNDERSTAND, SO MUCH POWER BEYOND ANYONE'S CONTROL!



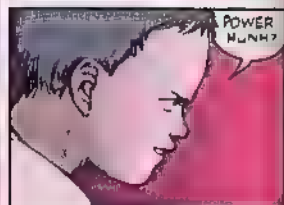
YOU'RE LOOKING AT THE TRUTH THROUGH LENSES THAT DISTORT EVERYTHING



WELL, YOU CERTAINLY TOLD US. NONETHELESS WE'D LIKE TO TRY AND UNDERSTAND AKIRA'S POWER...



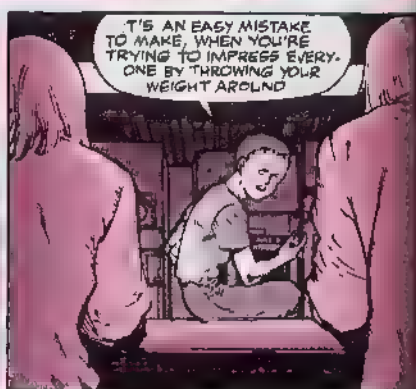
...WITH OR WITHOUT THE AID OF OUR TOOLS



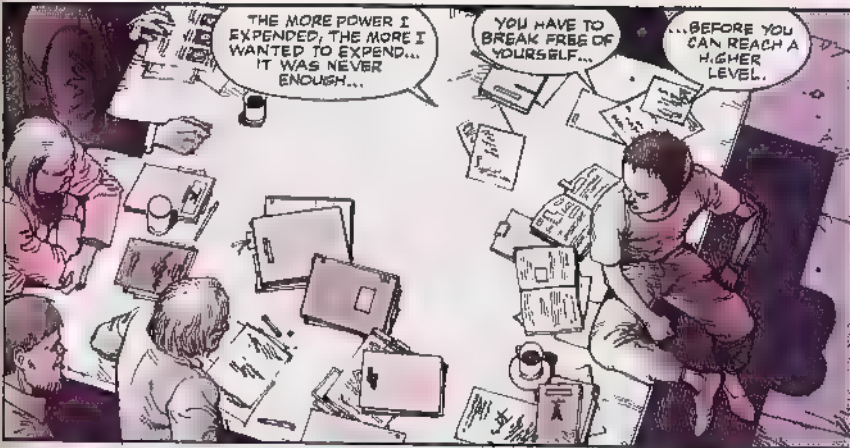
POWER MUNCH?



THAT'S HOW I THOUGHT ABOUT AKIRA, TOO... IN THE BEGINNING.



IT'S AN EASY MISTAKE TO MAKE, WHEN YOU'RE TRYING TO IMPRESS EVERYONE BY THROWING YOUR WEIGHT AROUND



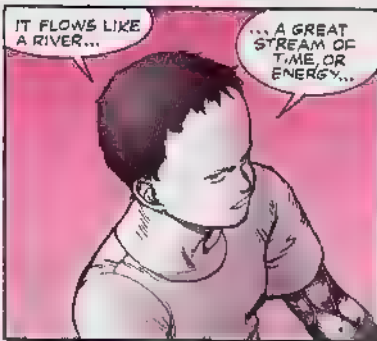
THE MORE POWER I EXPENDED, THE MORE I WANTED TO EXPEND... IT WAS NEVER ENOUGH...

YOU HAVE TO BREAK FREE OF YOURSELF...

...BEFORE YOU CAN REACH A HIGHER LEVEL.



A HIGHER LEVEL OF POWER?



IT FLOWS LIKE A RIVER...

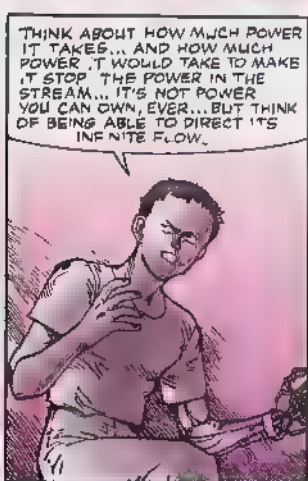
...A GREAT STREAM OF TIME, OR ENERGY...



HOW CAN I DESCRIBE IT?



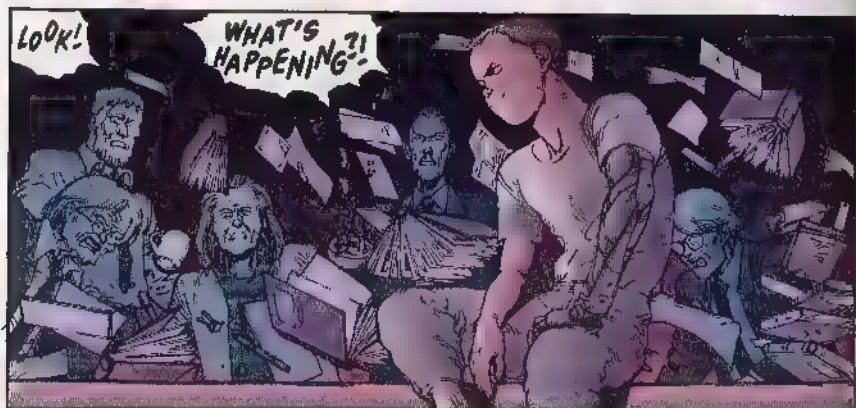
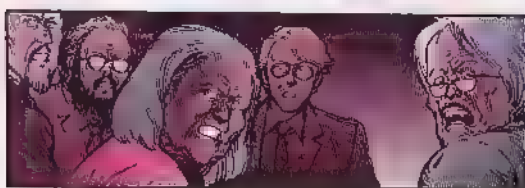
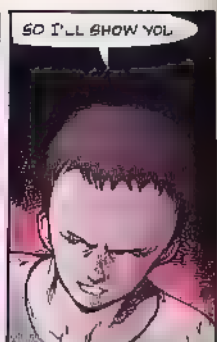
FOR EXAMPLE, THINK ABOUT THE EARTH... HOW IT ROTATES...



THINK ABOUT HOW MUCH POWER IT TAKES... AND HOW MUCH POWER IT WOULD TAKE TO MAKE IT STOP THE POWER IN THE STREAM... IT'S NOT POWER YOU CAN OWN, EVER... BUT THINK OF BEING ABLE TO DIRECT ITS INFINITE FLOW.

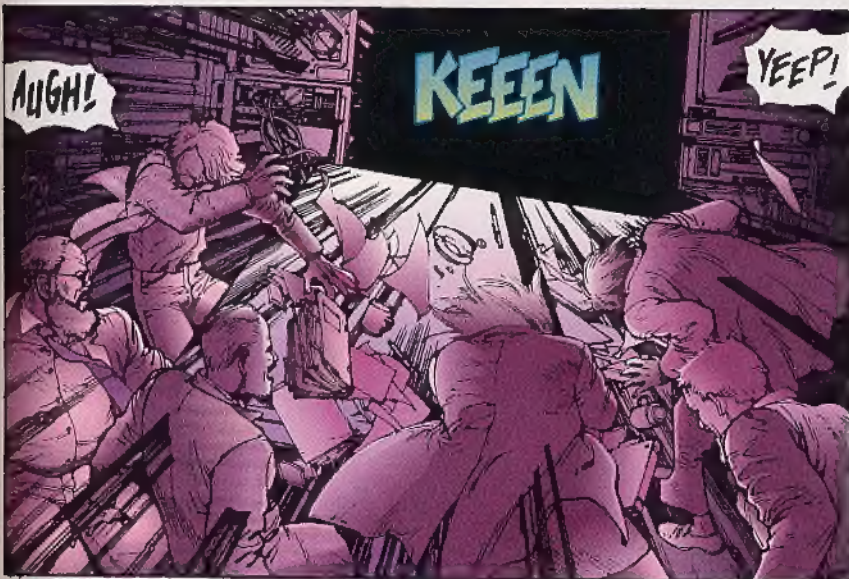


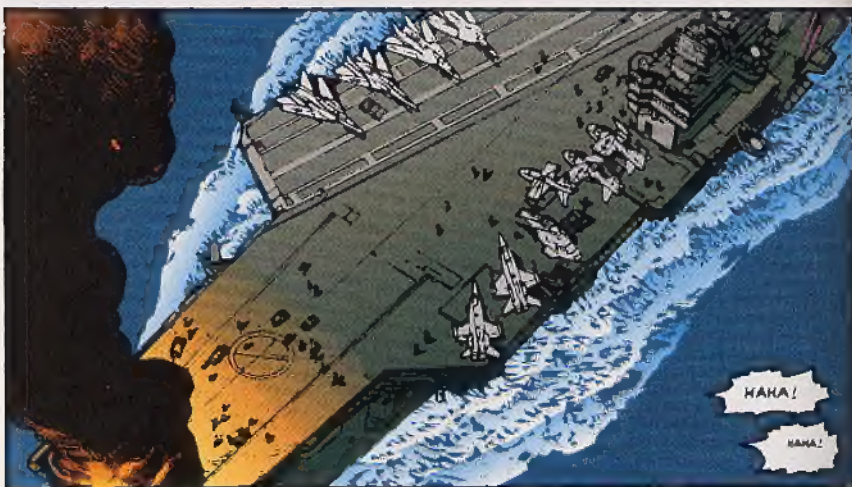
WE TAKE IT TOTALLY FOR GRANTED... BUT THE POWER IT TAKES TO TURN THE EARTH ON ITS AXIS...



NOW DO YOU
SEE?

THE TRUTH AND YOUR SCIENCE ARE
IN COMPLETELY DIFFERENT
DIMENSIONS!





NEXT ISSUE: THE GRAND CONVOCATION!



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managing editor • New York

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JO DUFFY

english adaptation

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with the

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The Emperor Akira sleeps on his throne, but there's no rest for a world still reeling under the impact of his terrible and awesome powers. No lull for the covert agents planning their secret battles on Neo-Tokyo's broken rooftops. No quiet for Kaneda and the Colonel fighting against howling madmen and thundering weapons' fire. No peace aboard deadly warships playing host to baby-faced assassins come to do their governments' dirty work. Yes, Akira sleeps... but for the world, there's no calm against the storms he has set in motion.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

